

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. My name is Annie Rice and I'm from Billings. I am here in / support of the creation of a state wide, Prescription Drug Registry.

Date 4/4/2011

In the spring of 2002, my little brother became a prescription drug addict. This addiction has affected every member of my family. HB 83

My brother was working at a local stockyard with some bulls, when one, ran towards him. He tried to climb the fence, but his foot slipped and a 2000 pound bull rammed into the center of his back. It threw him in the air, snapped his knee and caused irreparable damage to his spine.

The resulting back pain introduced my brother to narcotic prescriptions that were necessary to his recovery.

However, after several months of prescription drug use, my brother began to change. He began missing work, was distant, and sick. He was rapidly using up his prescription and would refill before the suggested date. Before he realized what was happening, he was addicted. He tried to stop taking the pain medication, but could not overcome the effects of withdrawal.

For the next 4 years, my brother would do anything possible to not feel withdrawal symptoms. He began to want prescription drugs more than his job, his home, or his family. He stole from others, faked illness and pain, spent multiple hours in various emergency rooms, and asked all his friends for their leftover pain medication. It became an obsession and one that almost killed him.

At one point, he went on a 3:00 am rampage in his 1977 Ford Pickup. He hit cars, light poles, swerved all over the Billings west end. He hit one large truck --- on the other side of that truck was a tent full of little girls having a sleepover. Were that truck not parked there or had he been a foot in either direction, he would have ran over that tent. The drugs he had taken that day were prescribed through a first time visit to a dentist that morning.

I speak today, however, for the families of prescription drug addicts. My family tried to contact pharmacies, doctors, and dentists to stop my brother from getting prescriptions. These professionals were sympathetic, but told us they could only make a note in his file. There was no way they could share that information with other healthcare professionals.

Consequently, my brother was able to lie to over 60 doctors and dentists, fill prescriptions at over 15 pharmacies, make repeated emergency visits and rarely be denied his fix.

Had this registry been in place earlier, my brother may not have been able to obtain the amount of narcotics he did, thus there would be safeguards protecting my brother from himself. Additionally, it might have prevented family heartache and potential hazards to his community.

I am not against prescription drugs. I know pain is real and narcotic ms are essential to alleviate this pain. I believe a prescription drug registry would allow patients receiving long term care to easily obtain prescriptions, while monitoring and hindering "drug seekers" who abuse and misuse prescription medications.

Thanks for your time.

PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY

Exhibit No. _____

Date _____

Bill No. _____

MONTANA PATIENT SAFETY ACT

HB 83: To Create a Prescription Drug Registry for Montana

Coalition Partners

American Academy of Pain Management * American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
Blue Cross Blue Shield of MT * CSKT Tribal Health Department Head Kevin Howlett
New West Health Services * MBCC * MT Department of Justice * MT Medical Association
MT Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians * MT Pain Initiative
MT Nurses Association * MT Pharmacy Association

A Prescription Drug Registry is a database of Schedule II-V drugs filled in Montana that prescribers and pharmacists can reference when writing or filling prescriptions to verify their patients' medication histories. The registry is an important tool that can help healthcare providers make the best treatment decisions for their patients.

The Coalition Partners support HB 83 because they know something must be done to reduce drug abuse and diversion in Montana. They understand we must ensure that patients who truly need prescription medications get them, while preventing pill-seekers from obtaining drugs.

Benefits of a Prescription Drug Registry

- ✓ Drug Abuse & Diversion Prevention: A prescription drug registry will deter those who would otherwise misuse or sell these drugs.
- ✓ Improved Patient Care: Doctors can use information from the registry to supplement patient evaluations and confirm their patients' medical histories.
- ✓ Early Intervention: Healthcare providers may use the registry to help identify patients in need of substance abuse treatment in the earliest stages of misuse or addiction.
- ✓ Public Health Initiative: Public health officials can use statistics from the registry, with personal information removed, to monitor trends and address prescribing problems.

As of January 2011...

- ✓ 43 states have passed legislation authorizing prescription drug registries.
- ✓ Registries are fully operational in 34 states.
- ✓ All 4 states surrounding Montana have prescription drug registries.

The Invisible Epidemic

- Prescription drugs are now the 2nd most commonly abused illicit substance, behind only marijuana.
- Prescription drugs are the drugs of choice for 12-13 year olds.
- In Montana, prescription drugs contribute to over 300 deaths each year.
- Montana teens have the 3rd highest rate of prescription pain-killer abuse, with 10% reporting past-month, non-medical use of these powerful drugs.
- Nationwide, prescription drug abuse costs public and private insurers \$72.5 billion annually.
- One third of Montanans know someone personally who has had a problem with prescription drug abuse.

Key Provisions of HB 83

Privacy and confidentiality

Section 6 specifically states that information in the registry is confidential health care information and the Board of Pharmacy may only allow access to the individuals specified in Section 7.

Section 7 requires that the Board must adopt rules to ensure that access is compliant with HIPAA and our right to privacy protected under the Montana Constitution. Access is limited to:

- prescribers and dispensers of these drugs
- an individual requesting his or her own registry profile
- healthcare licensing boards if it is related to an active investigation
- law enforcement with an investigative subpoena to access a specific profile. These requests must be approved by the administrator of the program.

Section 14 sets a civil penalty of up to \$10,000 per violation for unauthorized access to information in the registry.

Immunity

Section 8 protects those who use the registry in accordance with this bill and any rules created by the Board of Pharmacy:

- Prescribers or dispensers are **not required** to use information in the registry.
- This section ensures that they cannot be held liable for relying or not relying on the information in the registry.

Funding

Section 12 specifies that the Board of Pharmacy will collect a fee from those who prescribe or dispense controlled substances in Montana to pay for all costs associated with creating and maintain the registry. The fee cannot exceed \$15 and will sunset after four years.